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CENTRE FOR
REFUGEE STUDIES

4700 Keele St.
8th Floor, York
Research Tower
Toronto ON
Canada M3J 1P3
Tel 416 736-5663
Fax 416 736-5837
crs@yorku.ca
www.yorku.ca/crs

May 14, 2010

Dear Honorable Delegates and Participants,

Re: War Crimes and Refugee Status Research Workshop

Thank you for joining us for our "War Crimes and Refugee Status Research Workshop" at York University! We very much appreciate that you have taken time from your busy schedule to spend the day with us exploring the application and interpretation of the "exclusion clauses" under both the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 *Protocol*. Our "War Crimes and Refugee Status Research Workshop" will review the work that has been done thus far on our collaborative international and comparative empirical research project that is studying how Article 1F(a) of the 1951 *Convention* is applied and interpreted in five common law jurisdictions: Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

We should like to acknowledge and also thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's (SSHRC) International Opportunities Fund (IOF) for providing us with the funding necessary to undertake this unique empirical legal research study. As the principal applicant on the "War Crimes and Refugee Status" research project I should like also to acknowledge and thank my co-applicant, Kate Jastram, Faculty of Law, University of California at Berkeley, and our collaborators, Professors Guy Goodwin-Gill, Senior Research Fellow, All Souls College, University of Oxford, Jane McAdam, Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales, Australia, and Geoff Gilbert, Department of Law, University of Essex, United Kingdom, for their outstanding work, guidance, and support on our research project. It is a distinct honour and privileged to be associated with them on this research project.

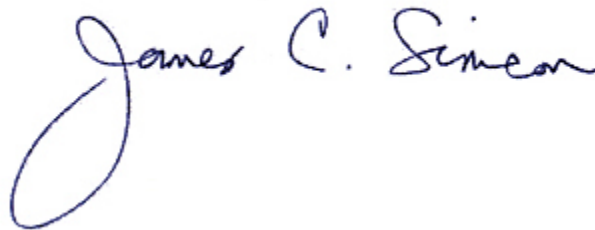
I should also like to thank Professor Guy Goodwin-Gill for agreeing to chair our "War Crimes and Refugee Status Research Workshop." Professor Goodwin-Gill is perhaps one of the foremost authorities in the world today on international refugee law and it is a great honour, of course, for us to have him chair our Research Workshop.

A special word of thanks is also in order for all of those who will be presenting papers at our Research Workshop. This includes Justice Professor Dr. Harald Dorig, Federal Administrative Court of Germany; Joseph Rikhof, Senior Legal Counsel, Justice Canada; Kees Wouters, Senior Refugee Law Advisor, Division of International Protection, UNHCR Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland; Professor Geoff Gilbert, Department of Law, University of Essex, United Kingdom; and, Professor Kate Jastram, Faculty of Law, University of California at Berkeley, USA.

It would be trite to outline the relevance and importance of a Research Workshop that addresses such a significant aspect of one of the leading causes of refugees today, war or conflict induced displacement, and whether and how those whom there are "serious reasons for considering" have "committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity" are excluded from Convention refugee status. Excluding those who are seeking asylum from persecution on this basis raises complex legal issues and deep philosophical and moral concerns. Exclusion under Article IF(a) raises highly complex legal issues because it falls squarely at the point where international refugee law intersects with international humanitarian law and international criminal law. The deep philosophical and moral questions that exclusion under Article IF(a) evokes include: Should anyone ever be excluded from Convention refugee status when they otherwise would meet the definition of refugee? Should those who cause refugees be allowed to benefit from the very treaty provisions that were drawn up to -protect the people they forcibly displaced?

Needless to say, our "War Crimes and Refugee Status Research Workshop" will be not only challenging but also will provide an opportunity to address some of the most interesting developments in the field of international refugee law today.

With Many Thanks and Very Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James C. Simeon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'J'.

Dr. James C. Simeon, Assistant Professor
School of Public Policy and Administration
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
Centre for Refugee Studies
128 McLaughlin College
York University
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

